

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER

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LONDON, SATURDAY, FEB. 6, 1819.

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NOTIFICATION.

All communications for the Publisher are desired to be addressed to THOMAS DOLBY, 34, Wardour Street, Soho.

N. B. Those gentlemen whose orders for back Numbers have not been attended to will be supplied as soon as possible.

COBBETT'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

SECOND EDITION.

Lately Published by T. DOLBY, No. 34, Wardour Street, Soho, and to be had of all Booksellers in Town and Country.

The First Edition of this Book, comprehending Five Thousand Copies, was disposed of in a fortnight after its original publication, without having any distributed according to the usual practice of the Bookselling Trade, namely, "on sale or return"; but the whole being actually sold and paid for. Such a sale is unprecedented in the annals of Bookselling. This Book, consisting of 186 pages, closely printed, and containing more matter than is usually to be found in a thick octavo volume, is sold at the cheap rate of two shillings and sixpence.

to

MORRIS BIRKBECK, Esq.
Of English Prairie, Illinois Territory.

North Hempstead, Long Island,
10 Dec. 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have read your two little books, namely, the "Notes on a Journey in America," and the "Letters from the Illinois." I opened the books, and I proceeded in the perusal, with fear and trembling; not because I supposed it possible for you to put forth an intended imposition on the world; but, because I had a sincere respect for the character and talents of

the writer; and because I knew how enchanting and delusive are the prospects of enthusiastic minds, when bent on grand territorial acquisitions.

My apprehensions were, I am sorry to have it to say, but too well founded. Your books, written I am sure without any intention to deceive and decoy, and without any even the smallest tincture of base self interest, are, in my opinion, calculated to produce great disappointment, not to say misery and ruin, amongst our own country people (for I will, in spite of your disavowal, still claim the honour of having you for a countryman), and great injury to America, by sending back to Europe accounts of that disappointment, misery, and ruin.

It is very true, that you decline advising any one to go to the Illinois, and it is also true, that your description of the hardships you encountered is very candid; but still, there runs throughout the whole of your Notes such an account as to the prospect, that is to say, the ultimate effect, that the book is, without your either wishing or perceiving it, calculated to deceive and decoy. You do indeed describe difficulties and hardships; but, then, you overcome them all with so much ease and gaiety, that you make them disregarded by your Eng-

lish readers, who, sitting by their fire-sides, and feeling nothing but the gripe of the Borough-mongers, and the tax-gatherer, merely cast a glance at your hardships and fully participate in all your enthusiasm. You do indeed fairly describe the rugged roads, the dirty hovels, the fire in the woods to sleep by, the pathless ways through the wildernesses, the dangerous crossings of the rivers; but, there are the beautiful meadows and rich lands *at last*; there is the fine *freehold domain at the end!* There are the giants and the enchanters to encounter; the slashings and the rib-roastings to undergo; but, then, there is, *at last*, the lovely languishing damsel to repay the adventurer.

The whole of your writings, relative to your undertaking, address themselves directly to *English Farmers*, who have property to the amount of two or three thousand pounds, or upwards. Persons of this description are, not by your express words, but by the natural tendency of your writings, *invited*, nay, strongly invited, to emigrate, with their property to the Illinois Territory. Many have already acted upon the invitation. Many others are about to follow them. I am convinced, that their doing this is unwise, and greatly injurious, not only to them, but to the character of America as a country to emigrate to, and, as I have, in the first Part of this work, promised to give, as far as I am able, a *true account of America*, it is my duty to state the *reasons* on which this conviction is

founded; and, I address the statement to you, in order, that, if you find it erroneous, you may, in the like public manner, show wherein I have committed error.

We are speaking, my dear Sir, of English Farmers possessing each two or three thousand pounds sterling. And, before we proceed to inquire, whether such persons ought to emigrate to the *West* or to the *East*, it may not be amiss to inquire a little, whether they ought to *emigrate at all!* Do not start, now! For, while I am very certain, that the emigration of such persons is not, in the end, calculated to produce benefit to America, as a nation, I greatly doubt of its being, *generally speaking*, of any benefit to the emigrants themselves, if we take into view the chances of their speedy relief at home.

Persons of advanced age, of settled habits, of deep-rooted prejudices, of settled acquaintances, of contracted sphere of movement, do not, to use Mr. GEORGE FLOWER's expression, "*transplant well.*" Of all such persons Farmers transplant worst; and, of all Farmers, English Farmers are the worst to transplant. Of some of the *tears*, shed in the ILLINOIS, an account reached me several months ago, through an eye-witness of perfect veracity, and a very sincere friend of freedom and of you, and whose information was given me, unasked for, and in the presence of several Englishmen, every one of whom, as well as myself, most ardently wished you success.

It is nothing, my dear Sir, to say, as you do, in the Preface to the *Letters from the Illinois*, that, "as little would I encourage the emigration of the tribe of *grumblers*, people who are petulant and discontented under the *every-day evils* of life. Life has its petty miseries in *all situations* and climates, to be mitigated or cured by the continual efforts of an elastic spirit, or to be borne, if incurable, with cheerful patience. But the *peevish emigrant* is perpetually comparing the *comforts* he has quitted, but never could enjoy, with the *privations of his new allotment*. He overlooks the *present good*, and broods over the *evil with habitual perverseness*; whilst in the recollection of the *past*, he dwells on the *good only*. Such people are always *bad associates*, but they are *an especial nuisance in an infant colony*."

Give me leave to say, my dear Sir, that there is too much *asperity* in this language, considering who were the objects of the censure. Nor do you appear to me to afford, in this instance, a very happy illustration of the absence of that *peevishness*, which you perceive in others, and for the yielding to which you call them a *nuisance*; an appellation much too harsh for the object and for the occasion. If you, with all your elasticity of spirit, all your ardour of pursuit, all your compensations of fortune in prospect, and all your gratifications of fame in possession, cannot with patience hear the wailings of some of

your neighbours, into what source are they to dip for the waters of content and good-humour?

It is no "every-day evil" that they have to bear. For an English Farmer, and, more especially, an English Farmer's wife, after crossing the sea and travelling to the Illinois with the consciousness of having expended a third of their substance, to purchase, as yet, nothing but sufferings; for such persons to boil their pot in the gipsy-fashion, to have a mere board to eat on, to drink whisky or pure water, to sit and sleep under a shed far inferior to their English cow-pens, to have a mill at twenty miles distance, an apothecary's shop at a hundred, and a doctor no where: these, my dear Sir, are not, to such people, "every-day evils of life." You, though in your little "cabin," have your *books*, you have your name circulating in the world, you have it to be given, by and by, to a city or a county; and, if you fail of brilliant success, you have still a sufficiency of fortune to secure you a safe retreat. Almost the whole of your neighbours must be destitute of all these sources of comfort, hope, and consolation. As they *now are*, their change is, and must be, for the worse; and, as to the future, besides the uncertainty attendant, every where, on that which is to come, they ought to be excused, if they, at their age, despair of seeing days as happy as those that they have seen.

It were much better for such people not to emigrate at all; for while they are *sure to come into a state of some*

degree of suffering, they leave behind them the chance of happy days; and, in my opinion, a certainty of such days. I think it next to impossible for any man of tolerable information to believe, that the present tyranny of the seat-owners can last another two years. As to what change will take place, it would, perhaps, be hard to say; but that some great change will come is certain; and, it is also certain, that the change must be for the better. Indeed, one of the motives for the emigration of many is said to be, that they think a *convulsion* inevitable. Why should such persons as I am speaking of fear a convulsion? Why should they suppose, that they will suffer by a convulsion? What have they done to provoke the rage of the blanketeers? Do they think that their countrymen, all but themselves, will be transformed into prowling wolves? This is precisely what the Boroughmongers wish them to believe; and, believing it, they flee instead of remaining to assist to keep the people down, as the Boroughmongers wish them to do.

Being here, however, they, as you say, *think only of the good* they have left behind them, and of the bad they find here. This is no fault of theirs: it is the natural course of the human mind; and this you ought to have known. You yourself acknowledge, that England "was never so dear to you as it is now in recollection: being no longer under its base oligarchy, I can think of my native country and her noble institutions,

" apart from her politics." I may ask you, by the way, what noble institutions she has, which are not of a political nature? Say the oppressions of her tyrants, say that you can think of her and love her renown and her famous political institutions, apart from those oppressions, and then I go with you with all my heart; but, so thinking, and so feeling, I cannot say with you, in your *NOTES*, that England is to me "matter of history," nor with you, in your *LETTERS FROM THE ILLINOIS*, that "where liberty is, there is my country."

But, leaving this matter, for the present, if English Farmers must emigrate, why should they encounter unnecessary difficulties? Coming from a country like a garden, why should they not stop in another somewhat resembling that which they have lived in before? Why should they, at an expence amounting to a large part of what they possess, prowl two thousand miles at the hazard of their limbs and lives, take women and children through scenes of hardship and distress not easily described, and that, too, to live like gipsies at the end of their journey, for, at least, a year or two, and, as I think, I shall show, without the smallest chance of their finally doing so well as they may do in these Atlantic States? Why should an English Farmer and his family, who have always been jogging about a snug home-stead, eating regular meals, and sleeping in warm rooms, push back to the Illinois, and encounter those hardships, which require all the

habitual disregard of comfort of an American bark-woodsman to overcome? Why should they do this? The undertaking is hardly reconcileable to reason in an Atlantic *American* Farmer who has half a dozen sons, all brought up to use the axe, the saw, the chisel and the hammer from their infancy, and every one of whom is ploughman, carpenter, wheelwright, and butcher, and can work from sunrise to sun-set, and sleep, if need be, upon the bare boards. What, then, must it be in an English Farmer and his family of helpless mortals? Helpless, I mean, in this scene of such novelty and such difficulty? And what is his *wife* to do; she who has been torn from all her relations and neighbours, and from every thing that she liked in the world, and who, perhaps, has never, in all her life before, been *ten miles* from the cradle in which she was *nursed*? An American farmer mends his plough, his waggon, his tackle of all sorts, his house-hold goods, his shoes: and, if need be, he *makes* them all. Can our people do all this, or any part of it? Can they live without bread for months? Can they live without beer? Can they be otherwise than miserable, cut off, as they are, from all intercourse with, and hope of hearing of, their relations and friends? The truth is, that this is not *transplanting*, it is *tearing up and flinging away*.

Society! What society can these people have? 'Tis true they have nobody to envy, for nobody can have any thing to enjoy. But there may

be, and there must be, mutual complainings, upbraiding; and every unhappiness will be traced directly to him who has been, however unintentionally, the cause of the unhappy person's removal. The very foundation of your plan necessarily contained the seeds of discontent and ill-will. A *colony* all from the same country was the very worst project that could have been fallen upon. You took upon yourself the *charge* of *Moses* without being invested with any part of his *authority*; and absolute as this was, he found the charge so heavy, that he called upon the Lord to share it with him, or to relieve him from it altogether. Soon after you went out, an Unitarian Priest, upon my asking what you were going to do in that wild country, said, you were going to form a community, who would be "content "to worship *one God*." "I hope not," said I, "for he will have plagues "enough without adding a priest to the "number." But, perhaps, I was wrong; for *Aaron* was of great assistance to the leader of the Israelites.

As if the inevitable effects of disappointment and hardship were not sufficient, you had, too, a sort of *partnership* in the *leaders*. This is sure to produce feuds and bitterness in the long run. Partnership-sovereignties have furnished the world with numerous instances of poisonings and banishments and rottings in prison. It is as much as merchants, who post their books every Sunday, can do to get along without quarrelling. Of man and wife, though they are flesh of

flesh and bone of bone, the harmony is not always quite perfect, except in France, where the husband is the servant, and in Germany and Prussia, where the wife is the slave. But, as for a partnership sovereignty without disagreement, there is but one single instance upon record; that, I mean, of the *two kings of Brentford*, whose cordiality was, you know, so perfect, that they both smelt to the same nose-gay. This is, my dear Sir, no bantering. I am quite serious. It is impossible that separations should not take place, and equally impossible that the neighbourhood should not be miserable. This is not the way to settle in America. The way is, to go and *sit yourself down amongst the natives*. They are already settled. They can *lend* you what you want to borrow, and happy they are always to do it. And, which is the great thing of all great things, you have their *women for your women to commune with*!

RAPP, indeed, has done great things; but RAPP has the authority of Moses and that of Aaron united in his own person. Besides, Rapp's community observe in reality that celibacy, which Monks and Nuns pretend to, though I am not going to take my oath, mind, that none of the tricks of the Convent are ever played in the tabernacles of *Harmony*. At any rate, Rapp secures the *effects* of celibacy; first, an absence of the expence attending the breeding and rearing of children, and, second, unremitting labour of woman as well as man. But, where, in all the world is the match of

this to be found? Where else shall we look for a Society composed of persons willing and able to forego the gratification of the most powerful propensity of nature, for the sake of getting money together? Where else shall we look for a band of men and women who love money better than their own bodies? Better than their *souls* we find people enough to love money; but, who ever before heard of a set that preferred the love of money to that of their bodies? Who, before, ever conceived the idea of putting a stop to the procreation of children, for the sake of saving the expence of bearing and breeding them? This Society, which is a perfect prodigy and monster, ought to have the image of MAMMON in their place of worship; for that is the object of their devotion, and not the God of nature. Yet the persons belonging to this unnatural association are your nearest neighbours. The masculine things here, called women, who have imposed barrenness on themselves, out of a pure love of gain, are the nearest neighbours of the affectionate, tender-hearted wives and mothers and daughters, who are to inhabit your colony, and who are, let us thank God, the very reverse of the petticoated Germans of *Harmony*.

In such a situation, with so many circumstances to annoy, what happiness can an English family enjoy in that country, so far distant from all that resembles what they have left behind them? "The fair Enchantress, *Liberty*," of whom you speak with not too much rapture, they would have

found in any of these States, and, in a garb, too, by which they would have recognized her. Where they now are, they are *free* indeed; but their freedom is that of the wild animals in your woods. It is not *freedom*, it is *no government*. The *GIPSES*, in England, are *free*; and any one, who has a mind to live in a cave, or cabin, in some hidden recess of our *Hampshire forests*, may be *free* too. The English farmer, in the Illinois, is, indeed, beyond the reach of the Boroughmongers; and so is the man that is in the grave. When it was first proposed, in the English Ministry, to *drop quietly* the title of *King of France* in the enumeration of our king's titles, and, when it was stated to be an expedient *likely to tend to a peace*, MR. WINDHAM, who was then a member of the Cabinet, said: "As this is a measure of *safety*, and "as, doubtless, we shall hear of others "of the same cast, what think you of "going under ground at once?" It was a remark enough to cut the liver out of the hearers; but Pitt and his associates had no livers. I do not believe, that any twelve Journeymen, or Labourers, in England would have voted for the adoption of this mean and despicable measure.

If, indeed, the Illinois were the *only* place out of the reach of the Borough-grasp; and, if men are resolved to get out of that reach; then, I should say, Go to the Illinois, by all means. But, as there is a country, a settled country, a free country, full of kind neighbours, full of all that is good, and when this country is to be *reversed* in order to

get at the acknowledged hardships of the Illinois, how can a sane mind lead an English Farmer into the expedition?

It is the enchanting damsel that makes the knight encounter the hair-breadth scapes, the sleeping on the ground, the cooking with cross-sticks to hang the pot on. It is the *Prairie*, that pretty French word, which means green grass bespangled with daisies and cowslips! Oh, God! What delusion! And that a man of sense; a man of superior understanding and talent; a man of honesty, honour, humanity and lofty sentiment, should be the cause of this delusion? I, my dear Sir, have seen *Prairies* many years ago, in America, as fine as yours, as fertile as yours, though not so extensive. I saw those Prairies settled on by American Loyalists, who were carried, with all their goods and tools to the spot, and who were furnished with four years' provisions; all *at the expence of England*; and who had the lands *given them*; tools *given them*; and who were thus seated down on the borders of *creeks*; which gave them easy communication with the inhabited plains near the sea. The settlers that I particularly knew were Connecticut men. Men with families of sons. Men able to do as much in a day at the works necessary in their situation, as so many Englishmen would be able to do in a week. They began with a *shed*; then rose to a *log-house*; and next to a *frame house*; all of their own building. I have seen them manure their land with *Salmon* caught in their

creeks and with *pigeons* caught on the and itself. It will be a long while before you will see such beautiful *Corn-fields* as I saw there. Yet nothing but the danger and disgrace which attended their return to Connecticut prevented their returning, though there they must have begun the world anew. I saw them in their log-buts and saw them in their frame-houses. They had overcome all their difficulties as settlers; they were under a government which required neither tax nor service from them; they were as happy as people could be as to ease and plenty; but, still they sighed for Connecticut; and especially the women, young as well as old, though we, gay fellows with worsted or silver lace upon our bright red coats, did our best to make them happy by telling them entertaining stories about Old England, while we drank their coffee and grog by gallons, and eat their fowls, pigs, and sausages and sweet-meats bywheel-barrow loads; for, though we were by no means *shy*, their hospitality far exceeded our appetites. I am an old hand at the work of settling in wilds. I have, more than once or twice, had to begin my nest and go in, like a bird, making it habitable by degrees; and, if I, or, if such people as my old friends above-mentioned, with every thing found for them and brought to the spot, had difficulties to undergo, and sighed for home even after all the difficulties were over, what must be the lot of an English Farmer's family in the Illinois?

All this I told you, my dear sir, in London just before your departure. I begged of you and Mr. Richard Flower both, not to think of the Wildernesses, I begged of you to go to within a day's ride of some of these great cities, where your ample capital and your great skill could not fail to place you upon a footing, at least with the richest amongst the most happy and enlightened Yeomanry in the world; where you would find every one to praise the improvements you would introduce, and nobody to envy you any thing that you might acquire. Where you would find society as good, in all respects, as that which you had left behind you. Where you would find neighbours ready prepared for you far more generous and hospitable than those in England can be, loaded and pressed down as they are by the inexorable hand of the Borough-villains. I offered you a letter (which, I believe, I sent you,) to my friends the PAULS. "But," said I, "you want no letter. "Go into Philadelphia, or Bucks, or Chester, or Montgomery County; "tell any of the Quakers, or any body else, that you are an English Farmer, come to settle amongst them; "and I'll engage that you will instantly have friends and neighbours as good "and as cordial as those that you leave "in England."

At this very moment, if this plan had been pursued, you would have had a beautiful farm of two or three hundred acres. Fine stock upon it feeding on Swedish Turnips. A

house overflowing with abundance: comfort, ease, and, if you chose, elegance, would have been your inmates. *libraries*, public and private within your reach; and a communication with England much more quick and regular than that which you now have even with Pittsburgh.

You say, that "Philadelphians" "know nothing of the Western Countries." Suffer me, then, to say, that you know nothing of the *Atlantic States*, which, indeed, is the only apology for your saying, that the *Americans have no mutton fit to eat*, and regard it *only as a thing fit for dogs*. In this island every farmer has sheep. I kill *fatter lamb* than I ever *saw in England*, and the *fattest mutton I saw, I saw, in company with Mr. Harline, in Philadelphia market last winter*. At *BRIGHTON*, near Boston, they produced, at a cattle show this fall, an *ox of two-thousand seven-hundred pounds weight*, and *sheep much finer*, than you and I saw at the *Smithfield Show in 1814*. Mr. *Judge Lawrence* of this county, kept for seven years, an average of *five hundred Merinos* on his farm of *one hundred and fifty acres*, besides raising twenty acres of *Corn* and his usual pretty large proportion of grain! Can your Western Farmers beat that? Yes, in extent, as the surface of *five dollars beats that of a guinea*.

I suppose that Mr. *Judge Lawrence's* farm, close by the side of a bay that gives him two hours of water-carriage to *New-York*; a farm with twenty acres of meadow, *real prairie*; a gen-

tleman's house and garden; barns, sheds, cider-house, stables, coach house corn-cribs, and orchards that may produce from four to eight thousand bushels of apples and pears: I suppose, that this farm is worth *three hundred dollars an acre*; that is, forty-five thousand dollars; or about, *twelve or thirteen thousand pounds*.

Now, then, let us take a look at your estimate of the expences of *sitting down in the prairies*.

Copy from my Memorandum Book.

Estimate of money required for the comfortable establishment of my family on *Bolting House*, now English prairie; on which the first instalment is paid. About 720 acres of woodland, and 720 prairie—the latter to be chiefly grass:—

	Dollars.
Second instalment, August, 1819, 720 dollars; Third, August, 1820, 720 dollars; Fourth, August, 1821, 720 dollars	2160
Dwelling-house and appurtenances	4500
Other buildings	1500
4680 rods of fencing, viz. 3400 on the prairie, and 1280 round the woodland	1170
Sundry wells, 200 dollars; gates, 100 dollars; cabins, 200 dollars	500
100 head of cattle, 900 dollars; 20 sows, &c. 100 dollars; sheep, 1000 dollars	2000
Ploughs, waggons, &c. and sundry tools and implements	270
Houskeeping until the land supplies us	1000
Shepherd one year's wages, herdsman one year, and sundry other labourers	1000
One cabinet maker, one wheelwright, one year, making furniture and implements, 300 dollars each	600
Sundry articles of furniture, ironmongery, pottery, glass, &c.	500
Sundries, fruit trees, &c.	100
First instalment already paid	720
Five horses on hand worth	300
Expence of freight and carriage of linen, bedding, books, clothing, &c.	1000
Value of articles brought from England	4500
Voyage and journey	2000
	23,820
	£5359 sterling.
Allow about 600 dollars more for seed and corn	141
	£5500

So here is more than one third of the amount of Mr. Judge Lawrence's farm. To be sure, there are only about 18,000 dollars expended on land, buildings, and getting at them; but, what a life is that which you are to lead for a thousand dollars a year, when two good domestic servants will cost four hundred of the money? Will you live like one of the Yeomen of your rank here? Then, I assure you, that your domestics and groceries (the latter three times as dear as they are here) and crockery-ware (equally dear) will more than swallow up that pitiful sum. You allow six thousand dollars for buildings. Twice the sum would not put you, in this respect, upon a footing with Mr. Lawrence. His land is all completely fenced and his grain in the ground. His apple trees have six thousand bushels of apples in their bds, ready to come out in the spring; and, a large part of these to be sold at a high price to go on ship-board. But, what is to give you his market? What is to make your pork, as soon as killed, sell for 9 or 10 dollars a hundred, and your cows at .45 or .50 dollars each, and your beef at 7 or 8 dollars a hundred, and your corn at a dollar, and wheat at two dollars, a bushel?

However, happiness is in the mind; and, if it be necessary to the gratification of your mind to inhabit a wilderness and be the owner of a large tract of land, you are right to seek and enjoy this gratification. But, for the plain, plodding *English Farmer*, who simply seeks safety for his little property, with some addition to it for

his children; for such a person to run the Atlantic states in search of safety, tranquillity, and gain in the Illinois, is, to my mind, little short of madness. Yet, to this mad enterprize is he allure by your captivating statements, and which statements become decisive in their effects upon his mind, when they are reduced to figures. This, my dear Sir, is the part of your writings, which has given me most pain. You have not meant to deceive; but you have first practised a deceit upon yourself, and then upon others. All the disadvantages you state; but, then, you accompany the statement by telling us how quickly and how easily they will be overcome. Salt Mr. HULME finds, even at ZANESVILLE, at two dollars and a half a bushel; but, you tell us, that it soon will beat a quarter of a dollar. And thus it goes all through.

I am happy, however, that you have given us figures in your account of what an English farmer may do with two thousand pounds. It is alluring, it is fallacious, it tends to disappointment, misery, ruin, and broken hearts; but it is open and honest in intention, and it affords us the means of detecting and exposing the fallacy. Many and many a family have returned to New England after having emigrated to the West in search of fine estates. They, able workmen, exemplary livers, have returned to labour in their native States amongst their relations and old neighbours; but, what are our poor ruined countrymen to do, when they become pennyless? If I could root my country from my heart, common humanity would urge me to make an humble attempt to dissipate the charming delusions, which have, without your perceiving it, gone forth from your sprightly and able pen, and which delusions are the more dangerous on account of your justly high and well-known character for understanding and integrity.

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The statement, to which I allude stands as follows, in your tenth Letter from the Illinois.

A capital of 2000*l.* sterling, (8,889 dollars,) may be invested on a section of such land, in the following manner,

Dollars.

Purchase of the land, 640 acres, at 12 dollars per acre	1280
House and buildings, exceedingly convenient and comfortable, may be built for	1500
A rail fence round the woods, 1000 rods, at 25 cents per rod	250
About 1800 rods of ditch and bank, to divide the arable into 10 fields, at 33 <i>½</i>	600
Planting 1800 rods of live fence	150
Fruit trees for orchard, &c.	100
Horses and other live stock	1500
Implements and furniture	1000
Provision for one year, and sundry incidental charges	1000
Manufactured articles of linen, books, apparel, implements, &c. brought from England	1000
Carriage of ditto, suppose 2000 lbs. at 10 dollars per cwt.	200
Voyage and travelling expenses of one person, suppose	300

8889

Note.—The first instalment on the land is 320 dollars, therefore 960 dollars of the purchase money remain in hand, to be applied to the expences of cultivation, in addition to the sums above stated.

Expenditure of first year.

Breaking up 100 acres, 2 dollars per acre	200
Indian corn for seed, 5 barrels, (a barrel is five bushels)	10
Planting ditto	25
Horse-hoeing ditto, one dollar per acre	100
Harvesting ditto, 1 <i>½</i> dollar per acre	150
Ploughing the same land for wheat, 1 dollar per acre	100
Seed wheat, sowing, and barrowing	175
Incidental expences	240

Produce of first year.

100 acres of Indian corn, 50 bushels (or 10 barrels) per acre, at 2 dollars per barrel	2000
Net produce	1000

Expenditure of second year.

Breaking up 100 acres for Indian corn, with expences on that crop	485
Harvesting and threshing wheat, 100 acres	350
Ploughing 100 acres for wheat, seed, &c.	275
Incidents	290

1400

Produce of second year,	
100 acres Indian corn, 10 barrels per acre, 2 dollars per barrel	2000
100 acres wheat, 20 bushels per acre, 75 dollars per barrel	1500 3500
Net produce	2100

Expenditure of third year.

Breaking up 100 acres as before, with expences on crop of Indian corn	485
Ploughing 100 acres wheat stubble for Indian corn	100
Horse hoeing, harvesting, &c. ditto	285
Harvesting and threshing 100 acres wheat	350
Dung-carting 100 acres for wheat, after second crop of Indian corn	200
Ploughing 200 acres wheat, seed, &c.	550
Incidents	330

2800

Produce of third year.

200 acres Indian corn, 10 barrels per acre, 2 dollars per barrel	4000
100 acres wheat, 20 bushels per acre, 75 dollars per barrel	1500 5500
Net produce	3200

Expenditure of fourth year.

As the third	2300
Harvesting and threshing 100 acres more wheat	350
Additional incidents	50

2700

Produce of fourth year.

200 acres Indian corn, as above	4000
200 acres wheat	3000 7000
Net produce	4300

Summary.

	Expences.	Produce.
	Dollars.	Dollars.
First year	1000	2000
Second	1400	3500
Third	2300	5500
Fourth	2700	7000

Housekeeping and other expences for four years	4000	11,400
Net proceeds per ann.	-	1650

Increasing value of land by cultivation and settlements, half a dollar per ann. on 640 acres	-	320
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Annual clear profit 1970

"Twenty more: kill 'em! Twenty more: kill them too!" No: I will not compare you to BOBADIL; for he was an intentional deceiver; and you are unintentionally deceiving others and yourself too. But, really, there is in this statement something so extravagant; so perfectly wild; so ridiculously untrue, that it is not without a great deal of difficulty that all my respect for you personally can subdue in me the temptation to treat it with the contempt due to its intrinsic demerits.

I shall notice only a few of the items. A house, you say, "exceedingly convenient and comfortable, together with farm-buildings, may be built for 1,500 dollars." Your own intended house you estimate at 4,500 and your out-buildings at 1,500. So that, if this house of the farmer (an English farmer, mind) and his buildings, are to be "exceedingly convenient and comfortable," for 1,500 dollars, your house and buildings must be on a scale, which, if not perfectly princely, must savour a good deal of aristocratical distinction. But this if relieves us; for even your house, built of pine timber and boards, and covered with cedar shingles, and finished only as a good plain farm-house ought to be, will, if it be thirty six feet front, thirty four feet deep, two rooms in front, kitchen and wash house behind, four rooms above, and a cellar beneath; yes, this house alone, the bare empty house, with doors and windows suitable, will cost you more than six thousand dollars. I state this upon good authority. I have taken the es-

timate of a building carpenter. "What Carpenter?" you will say. Why, a Long Island Carpenter, and the house to be built *within a mile of Brooklyn*, or two miles of New York. And this is giving you all the advantage, for here the pine is cheaper than with you; the shingles cheaper; the lime and stone and brick as cheap or cheaper; the glass, iron, lead, brass and tin, all at half or a quarter of the Prairie price; and, as to labour, if it be not cheaper here than with you, men would do well *not to go so far in search of high wages!*

Let no simple Englishman imagine, that here, at and near New York, in this *dear place*, we have to pay for the boards and timber *brought from a distance*; and that you, the happy people of the land of daisies and of cow-slips, can cut down *your own good and noble oak trees upon the spot, on your own estates, and turn them into houses without any carting*. Let no simple Englishman believe such idle stories as this. To dissipate all such notions, I have only to tell him, that the American farmers on this island, when they have buildings to make or repair, go and *purchase* the pine timber and boards, at the very same time that they *cut down their own oak trees and cleave up and burn them as firewood!* This is the universal practice in all the parts of America that I have ever seen. What is the cause? Pine wood is *cheaper*, though *bought*, than the oak is *without buying*. This fact, which nobody can deny, is a complete proof that you gain *no advantage* from being in woods, as far as *building* is

concerned. And, the truth is, that boards and plank, which have been used in the Prairie, have actually been brought from the Wabash, charged with ten miles rough land carriage: how far they may have come down the Wabash I cannot tell.

Thus, then, the question is settled, that building must be *cheaper here than in the Illinois*. If, therefore, a house, 86 by 34 feet, cost *here* 6,000 dollars, what can a man get *there* for 1,500 dollars? A miserable hole, and no more. But here are to be *farm-buildings and all*, in the 1,500 dollars' worth! A barn, 40 feet by 30, with a door, and with stables in the sides, cannot be built for 1,500 dollars, leaving out wagon house, corn-crib, cattle-hovels, yard fences, pigsties, smoke house, and a great deal more! And yet, you say, that all these and a farm-house into the bargain, all "exceedingly comfortable and convenient," may be had for 1,500 dollars!

Now, you know, my dear Sir, that this is said in the face of all America. Farmers are my readers. They all understand these matters. They are not only good, but impartial judges; and I call upon you to contradict, or even question, my statements, if you can.

Do my eyes deceive me? Or do I really see *one hundred and fifty dollars* put down as the expence of "planting" "one thousand eight hundred rod of line fence"? That is to say, *three quarters of a cent, or three quarters of an English half-penny a rod!* The "Enchantress, Liberty," must have

had you wholly to herself here; or, rather, she must have taken the pen out of your hand, and written this item herself; for so great a liberty with truth never was taken by any mortal being. *What plants? Whence to come?* Drawn out of the woods, or first sown in a nursery? Is it *seed* to be sown? *Where* are the seeds to come from? No levelling of the top of the bank; no drill; no sowing; no keeping clean for a year or two: or, *all these for three quarters of a cent a rod*, when the same works cost *half a dollar a rod in England!* Oh! monstrous tale! To dwell upon such a story is to insult the good sense of the reader. My real opinion is, that you will *never* have any thing worthy of the name of a live fence in the Prairies; and that the idea only makes part of a delusive dream. No labourer in America will *look* at a rod of your banks for three quarters of a cent.

Manure, too! And do you really want manure then? And, where, I pray, are you to get manure for 100 acres? But, supposing you to have it, do you seriously mean to tell us that you will carry it on for two dollars an acre? The *carrying on*, indeed, might perhaps be done for that, but, who pays for the *filling* and for the *spreading*? Ah, my dear Sir! I can well imagine your feelings at putting down the item of dung-carting, trifling as you make it appear upon paper. You now recollect my words when I last had the pleasure of seeing you, in Catherine Street, a few days before the departure of us both. I then dreaded

the dung-cart, and recommended the Tellian System to you, by which you would have the same crops every year without manure; but, unfortunately for my advice, you sincerely believed your land would be already too rich, and that your main difficulty would be not to *cart on* manure but to *cart off* the produce!

After this it appears unnecessary for me to notice any other part of this Transalleghanian romance, which I might leave to the admiration of the Edinburgh Reviewers, whose knowledge of these matters is quite equal to what they have discovered as to the Funding System and Paper-Money. But when I think of the flocks of poor English Farmers, who are tramping away towards an imaginary, across a real, land of milk and honey, I cannot lay down the pen, till I have noticed an item or two of the produce.

The farmer is to have 100 acres of Indian Corn, the first year. The minds of you gentlemen who cross the Alleghany seem to expand as it were, to correspond with the extent of the horizon that opens to your view; but, I can assure you, that if you were to talk to a farmer on this side of the mountains of a field of Corn of a hundred acres during the first year of a settlement, with grassy land and hands scarce, you would frighten him into a third-day ague. In goes your Corn, however! "Twenty more: kill 'em!" Nothing but ploughing: no harrowing; no marking; and only a horse-hoeing, during the summer, at a dollar *an acre*. The planting is to cost only a *quarter of a dollar an acre*. The planting will cost a *dollar an acre*. The horse-hoeing in your grassy land, *two dollars*. The *hand-hoeing*, which must be *well done*, or you will have no corn, *two dollars*; for, in spite of your truth, your rampant natural grass will be up before your corn, and a man must go to *a thousand hills* to do *half an acre a day*. It will cost *two dollars* to harvest a hundred bushels of *corn ears*. So that here are about *400* dollars of expenses on the Corn

alone, to be added. A *trifle*, to be sure, when we are looking through Transalleghanian glass, which diminishes out-goings and magnifies in-comings. However, here are four hundred dollars.

In goes the plough for what? "him again! Twenty more!" But this is in *October*, mind. Is the Corn off? It may be; but, where are the *four hundred waggon loads of corn stalks*? A prodigiously fine thing is this forest of fodder, as *high and thick* as an English coppice. But though it be of *no use to you*, we have the *meadows* without bounds, the coppice must be *removed*, if you please before you plough for wheat!

Let us pause here, then; let us look at the *battalion*, who are at work; for there must be little short of a Hessian Battalion. Twenty men and twenty horses *may* husk the Corn, cut and cart the stalks, plough and sow and harrow for the wheat; twenty two-legged and twenty four-legged animals *may do the work in the proper time*; but, if they do it, they must work *well*. Here is a goodly group to look at, for an English Farmer, without a penny in his pocket; for all his money is *gone long ago*, even according to your own estimate; and here, besides the expense of cattle and tackle, are *600* dollars, in bare wages, to be paid in a month! You and I both have forgotten the *shelling* of the Corn, which and putting it up will come to *50* dollars more at the least, leaving the price of the barrel to be paid for by the purchaser of the Corn.

But, what did I say? *Shell the Corn?* It must go into the *Cribs* first. It cannot be shelled *immediately*. And it must not be thrown into *heaps*. It must be put into *Cribs*. I have had made out an estimate of the expense of the Cribs for *ten thousand bushels* of Corn Ears: that is the crop; and the Cribs will cost *570* dollars! Though, mind, the farmer's *house*, *barns*, *stables*, *waggon-house*, and all, are to cost but *4,500* Dollars! But, the third year, our poor simpleton is to have *200*

... of corn! "Twenty more: kill 'em!" Another 570 dollars for cribs!

However, crops now come tumbling on him so fast, that he must struggle hard not to be stifled with his own superabundance. He has now got 200 acres of corn and 100 acres of wheat, which latter he has, indeed, had one year before! Oh, madness! But, to proceed. The hands to get in these crops and to sow the wheat, first taking away 200 acres of English corn in stalks, will, with the dunging for the wheat require, at least, *forty good men, and forty good horses* broken, for thirty days. Faith! when Farmer Simpleton sees all this (in his dreams, I mean), he will think himself a farmer of the rank of Job, before he can beset that example of patience, unworthy of imitation, and so seldom imitated.

Well, but Simpleton must bustle to get in his wheat. *In, indeed!* What can cover it, but the canopy of heaven? A *barn!* It will, at two English waggon loads of sheaves to an acre, require a barn a hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and twenty-three feet high up to the eves; and this barn, with two proper floors, will cost more than *seven thousand dollars*. He will put it in *stacks*; let him add six men to his battalion then. He will *thresh it in the field*; let him add ten more men! Let him, at once, send and press the Harmonites into his service; and make RAPP march at their head, for, never will he by any other means get in the crop; and, even then, if he pay fair wages, he will lose by it.

After the crop is in and the seed sown, in the fall, what is to become of Simpleton's men 'till Corn ploughing and planting time in the spring? And, then, when the planting is done, what is to become of them 'till harvest time? Is he, like BAYES, in the Rehearsal, to lay them down when he pleases, and, when he pleases, make them rise up again? To hear you talk

about these crops, and, at other times to hear you advising others to bring labourers from England, one would think you, for your own part, able, like CADMUS, to make men start up out of the earth. How would one ever have thought it possible for infatuation like this to seize hold of a mind like yours?

When I read, in your Illinois Letters, that you had *prepared* horses, ploughs, and other things, for putting in a hundred acres of Corn in the Spring, how I pitied you! I saw all your plagues, if you could not see them. I saw the grass choking your plants; the grubs eating them; and you fretting and turning from the sight with all the pangs of sanguine baffled hope. I expected you to have *ten bushels*, instead of *forty*, upon an acre. I saw your confusion, and participated in your mortification. From these feelings I was happily relieved by the Journal of our friend HULME, who informs the world, and our countrymen in particular, that you had not, in *July last, any Corn at all growing!*

Thus it is to reckon one's chickens before they are hatched: and thus the transallyghanian dream vanishes. You have been deceived. A warm heart, a lively imagination, and I know not what caprice about republicanism, have led you into sanguine expectations and wrong conclusions. Come, now! Confess it like yourself; that is, like a man of sense and spirit; like an honest and fair-dealing John Bull. To err belongs to all men, great as well as little; but, to be ashamed to confess error, belongs only to the latter.

Great as is my confidence in your candour, I can, however, hardly hope wholly to escape your anger for having so decidedly condemned your publications; but, I do hope, that you will not be so unjust as to impute my conduct to any base self-interested motive. I have no private interest, I can have no such interest, in endeavouring to check the mad torrent towards the West. I own nothing in these States, and never shall; and whether English

Farmers push on into misery and ruin, or stop here in happiness and prosperity, to me, as far as private interest goes, it must be the same. As to the difference in our feelings and notions about *country*, about *allegiance* and about *forms of government*, this may exist without any, even the smallest degree, of personal dislike. I was no hypocrite in England; I had no views further than those which I professed. I wanted nothing for myself but the fruit of my own industry and talent, and I wished nothing for my country but its liberties and laws, which say, that the people shall be *fairly represented*. England has been very happy and *free*; her greatness and renown have been surpassed by those of no nation in the world; her wise, just, and merciful laws form the basis of that freedom which we here enjoy; she has been fertile beyond all rivalry in men of learning and men devoted to the cause of freedom and humanity; her people, though proud and domineering, yield to no people in the world in frankness, good faith, sincerity, and benevolence: and, I cannot but know, that this state of things has existed, and that this people has been formed, under a government of king, lords, and commons. Having this powerful argument of experience before me, and seeing no reason why the thing should be otherwise, I have never wished for republican government in England; though,

rather than that the present tyrannical oligarchy should continue to trample on king and people, I would gladly see the whole fabric torn to atoms, and trust to chance for something better, being sure that nothing could be worse. But, if I am not a republican; if I think my duty towards England indefeasible; if I think that it becomes me to abstain from any act which shall seem to say I abandon her, and especially in this her hour of distress and oppression; and, if, in all these points, I differ from you, I trust, that to this difference no part of the above strictures will be imputed, but that the motive will be fairly inferred from the act, and not the act imputed unfairly to any motive.

I am,

My dear Sir,

With great respect for your talents
as well as character,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

W.M. COBBETT.

The Letter to Mr. Birkbeck was originally intended to appear only in the THIRD PART of MR. COBBETT'S YEAR'S RESIDENCE, in which it is to follow the JOURNAL OF MR. HULME; but it is now presented to the Reader, as the subject it treats of is deemed of the greatest importance to the Public at this time, and equally interesting to persons of all classes.

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